10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

position of the set in Mossi society. In the years immediately following initiation the members are much involved in group activities, e.g., the arrangement of social dances, courtship, and co-operation in work groups composed of male and female age-sets, and during this period joking is important. As the members attain adult status the groups tend to lose their structural integrity; their minor corporate functions dwindle and ultimately disappear as the responsibility of the young people to their kin groups increases. With this shift in emphasis, joking behavior also diminishes.

While it lasts, however, this type of joking likewise has a structural context characterized by the attributes already identified. Age-sets are structurally separate within the age-grade. Their relations are reciprocal: individual members co-operate in the arrangement of one another's sexual liaisons; they pool their labor and share the profits they earn as members of their co-operative work organizations; and young men often leave Yatenga as migrant laborers in groups organized on the basis of age-grade membership, thereby reinforcing many of the reciprocal ties established in the work groups. The ambivalence chafacteristic of the relationship is perhaps best explained as the rivalry of peers. Since there is no status hierarchy within a Mossi age-grade, the age-sets are structurally equivalent and independent.

Intervillage Joking

When intervillage joking is institutionalized it may involve all the members of each community. However, I believe it is particularly expected of their respective chiefs. In either case, the participants are separated by their differing political affiliations. The inhabitants of each village are expected to reciprocate in one another's defense, to be mutually hospitable, and to co-operate in the regulation of land tenure at their frontiers. Ambivalence derives from a history of past hostility, dating perhaps from an earlier period when competition for new land was keener and the expanding kingdom did not yet encompass all the villages now within its borders. Such villages are always structurally equivalent in status within the political system, and each is independent of the other.

Joking Between Ethnic Groups

The joking relationship which the Mossi maintain with the Gurunsi and the Samogho peoples, among others, appears to involve the same structural characteristics. However, I learned of this relationship only shortly before I left Yatenga, and a more certain statement concerning it must therefore await further research. It is certain that such joking occurs; I am unsure only of the number of other ethnic groups involved[3] and of the relevant details of their historical relations to the Mossi of Yatenga. The groups involved are again separate. There is an expectation that members of each group should extend hospitality and assistance to members of the other. As with villages whose inhabitants joke, the participants in this relationship are ambivalent in their attitudes; the present expectation of co-operation is coupled with a past

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Binger reports that the Mossi were divided into "a number of confederacies, more or less independent of each other, whose chiefs were vassals of Naba Sanum, the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou." He found, nevertheless, that although the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou claimed suzerainty over the Yatenga, he could not grant travelers permission to enter that territory.[3]

Crozat, who visited the Mossi in 1890, just two years after Binger, was told repeatedly that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had the right to control the destinies of all chiefs who claimed descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. But he, too, found that the principalities were self-governing and mutually independent, and were united only by the weak bond that attached them all to Ouagadougou. Noting the claims of the people he encountered that Ouagadougou was still supreme, Crozat suggests that "time and circumstances have weakened this sovereignty. The ruler of Ouagadougou is regarded by the other chiefs merely as their senior and the head of their family. They seldom obey him, yet they recognize that in certain cases he has the right to give them orders." Like many Frenchmen who came after him, Crozat concludes, "One will be struck, as I have been, by this political organization in which the waning of the central authority has led to a true feudal system closely reminiscent of a certain period in our own history."[4]

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Delafosse tells us that "the authority of the emperor [of Ouagadougou] does not seem to have been ignored within his borders except in very rare instances. The vassal kings, who were brothers, sons, or nephews of the emperor, usually obeyed him. In any case, the emperor did not interfere with the administration [of their territories], and required nothing from them except the payment of taxes and the raising of contingents for any expeditions he might have to organize against outside enemies (the emperors of Mali, Gao, or Segou; Moroccan pashas; etc.). In return, the emperor granted his support to those of his vassals who were unable to command the obedience of their subjects or tributaries."[5]

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It appears, then, that although the independent rulers and autonomous princes sometimes recognized the supremacy (if not the seniority) of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou, they were relatively free to rule as they wished. As possessors of the nam, they claimed and exercised the right to administer the peoples of their realms. It appears, furthermore, that the rulers of Ouagadougou seldom challenged the independence of their confreres in Yatenga, although the latter often disturbed them. For example, when Yatenga Naba Kango (ca. 1754-89) sacked and burned the Ouagadougou district of Yako for sheltering refugees from a civil war, the Mogho Naba did not come to the aid of the Yako Naba. Nor did he take offense when this chief, in order to regain his seat, was compelled to switch his

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allegiance to the Yatenga. The situation lasted throughout Kango's reign, "but as soon as he died, the Yako chiefs ceased to pay allegiance to his successors and paid homage, as before, to the court of Ouagadougou."[6] About fifty years later, Yako district was again captured by a Yatenga ruler, Naba Tougouri (ca. 1806–22), who deposed the reigning chief and installed his own. The deposed chief fled to his sovereign at Ouagadougou for aid and safety. He did receive sanctuary and eventually reconquered his principality, but there is no evidence that the Mogho Naba gave him any active support. Similarly, when another Yatenga ruler, Naba Totebaldbo (ca. 1834–50), once more conquered Yako as well as Riziam, another dependency of Ouagadougou, the Mogho Naba took no action. It was only after Totebaldbo's death that Riziam seceded from Yatenga and returned its allegiance to Ouagadougou. Yako did not submit to Ouagadougou's rule until some time later, when it revolted against Totebaldbo's son.[8] Similarly, both Mogho Naba Sanum and Mogho Naba Wobogo had difficulty in controlling a civil war between Yatenga and Yako which they felt would cause European travelers to think ill of the Mossi. During Crozat's visit to Ouagadougou, Mogho Naba Wobogo asked the combatants to cease fighting, but his efforts failed because "Yako would have liked to obey, but Yatenga refused."[7]

The Ouagadougou rulers experienced less difficulty with the weaker Tenkodogo kingdom, which seldom attacked their vassals or territories. Instead, the rulers of Tenkodogo often sought the aid of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou against their enemies or rebellious subjects. For example, when the Busansi subjects of the Tenkodogo Naba rebelled against him in the fifteenth century, Mogho Naba Dawoema of Ouagadougou went to his aid and defeated them.[8] However, when Korongo, the Tenkodogo Naba, asked Mogho Naba Wobogo to help him defeat a contestant for the nam in 1894, the Ouagadougou ruler refused and said he would acknowledge the victor.[9] In this case, personal considerations seem to have dictated the Mogho Naba's reply.

The rulers of Ouagadougou appear to have taken greater interest in the affairs of the Dimdamba. Here again, however, intervention was conditioned by personal considerations, and especially by relative strength. Failure to be prudent in this respect often resulted in disaster. Mogho Naba Doulougou's insistence on punishing Naba Piga (1806–23), a ruler of the Boussouma principality, resulted in his own death. One of Piga's subjects had fled to Ouagadougou to evade punishment, and the Mogho Naba had returned him with the injunction that he should be imprisoned but not killed. Nevertheless, Piga had the prisoner executed. Moreover, he sent a

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disrespectful message to the Mogho Naba asking that a horse which a Fulani had stolen from him and presented to the ruler be returned. Doulougou sent an army to chastise Piga, who quickly fled and later appealed to the Mogho Naba for pardon. No sooner had this pardon been granted than Piga again offended the Mogho Naba by granting refuge to his wayward son, who had been expelled from Ouagadougou. The Mogho Naba subsequently forgave his son, but he decided to punish the recalcitrant Piga once and for all. Piga fled at the approach of the royal army, but Doulougou, who had accompanied his troops, was wounded by an enemy arrow and died shortly after his return to Ouagadougou.[10]

A later Mogho Naba, Sanum (ca. 1861), fought, defeated, and executed Naba Zande of Boulsa for taxing the Boulsa people so heavily that they rebelled. After Zande was succeeded by his brother Yemde (ca. 1863–72), the Mogho Naba continued to intervene in Boulsa's affairs and eventually had Yemde executed. Yemde's undoing was the result of his inability or unwillingness to implement the Mogho Naba's desire—which was contrary to Mossi custom—to elect a ten-year-old boy to the chieftainship of Koupela district. The Koupela chief's brother ignored his young nephew and seized the nam; Yemde sent an army to depose him, but his men were routed. Suspecting treachery on Yemde's part, Mogho Naba Sanum sent an army to defeat and depose him and to place his father's brother in command of Boulsa. Yemde defeated the Mogho Naba's army. His victory was short-lived, however, because the Mogho Naba sent a larger army and routed his forces. Yemde fled to the territory of the Boussouma Dim and requested asylum. The Boussouma ruler, Ligidi, did not wish to incur the wrath of the Mogho Naba and dispatched Yemde to Ouagadougou. Yemde apparently convinced the Mogho Naba of his loyalty, but he was executed because he had inadvertently violated the rule that no descendant of a Kourita might see a Mogho Naba and live.[11]

Ligidi, in turn, found himself in conflict with the Mogho Naba. After surrendering Yemde to his sovereign, he had proceeded to Boulsa and seized some of the prisoner's property. At first the Mogho Naba paid no attention, but when he had made peace with Yemde's son, Kiba, he ordered Ligidi to return the property. Ligidi refused to do so and consequently became involved in a series of wars against Kiba and the Mogho Naba. Ligidi died of natural causes before peace was restored, leaving a legacy of hostility between Ouagadougou and Boussouma. Either in complicity with the ruling Mogho Naba (Wobogo) or in an attempt to gain his favor, the electors named Ligidi's brother, Kom, to the nam and ignored his son and rightful heir, Venewende. This unfortunate young man had no one to

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turn to, and fled to Wobogo for safety. Wishing to maintain good relations with Kom, the Mogho Naba forced Venewende to return to Boussouma, but with the injunction that he should not be killed. Nevertheless, the Boussouma ruler had the young prince executed. The angry Mogho Naba threatened reprisal and declared that "if the Boussouma chief was not careful, it would be too bad for all his people, because they would fare as badly as their chief."[12] He did not have an opportunity to carry out his threats, however, because the French arrived soon afterwards.

Whereas some Mogho Nanamse took an active interest in the affairs of their Dimdamba or even tried to control them, others hesitated to interfere with disobedient or recalcitrant subordinates, especially when they fought and quarreled among themselves. Mogho Naba Oubya did not interfere when a Boussouma ruler, Pougoula (1745-67), bragging that no one in the nation was strong enough to depose him, arrogantly annexed the Ouagadougou province of Pisila and chased its ruler into Yatenga. Pougoula then gave the chieftainship to the fugitive's son, on condition that he should henceforth recognize his sovereignty.[13] On another occasion, a recalcitrant Boussouma Dim called Zabo (ca. 1767–84) defeated and punished the people of the Mane principality for rejecting the ruler he had chosen for them. They insisted that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou had given Zabo the right to express his preference for a certain ruler, but not the right of choice itself. They appealed to Mogho Naba Waraga for help, but he ignored them. It may well be that Waraga was too involved in a war with the recalcitrant Riziam Naba to interfere, but there is no evidence that he ever censured Zabo. Again, Mogho Naba Sanum apparently took no part when Zende (ca. 1862–76), the ruler of Tema principality, and Totoabo, the ruler of Yako, joined forces against the ruler of La in a dispute over an abducted wife.[14] Perhaps, like other Mossi rulers, he did not care to deal with men who fought over women.

The relationship between the Mogho Naba and the Dimdamba, then, apparently varied in accordance with the persons involved and their relative strength. Sometimes they quarreled and fought; sometimes the Mogho Naba remained aloof from the Dimdamba's affairs; and sometimes the Dimdamba obeyed their sovereign and came to his aid. The one aspect of this relationship that seems to stand out, especially when the Dimdamba had no serious grievance, is their reluctance to fight against the Mogho Naba. Even Piga, the most belligerent in a long line of quarrelsome Boussouma rulers, always fled when Mogho Naba Doulougou attacked him, because "he did not wish to oppose his sovereign."[15] As we have seen, Yemde did fight against Mogho Naba Sanum, but he did so mainly be-

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cause he thought Sanum had attacked him unjustly. For such acts of war, the Dimdamba involved usually lost their lives, and in at least one such case a Dim was turned over to the Mogho Naba by another Dim. We have seen that Dimdamba occasionally came to the aid of the Mogho Naba against another Dim.

A question of some importance is whether this relationship between the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the rulers of independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities was characteristic of Mossi society or a rather late development. Was warfare the natural concomitant of a system in which the normally powerful Ouagadougou ruler was sometimes too weak to command allegiance from his peers and subordinates? Did the Mogho Naba resort to warfare as the only possible means of exercising his authority when his commands were challenged or ignored? Delafosse states, "Sometimes . . . , especially in very recent times, discord arose between the emperor [of Ouagadougou] and some of his vassal kings: thus Naba Sanum had to fight against the desire for independence of the kings of Boussouma and Boulsa."[16] Delafosse seems to suggest that the Mossi people were undergoing a period of stress when the Europeans arrived, and were faced with significant new administrative problems.

Here Binger appears to support Delafosse's view:

> Ever since he acceded to the throne, [Mogho Naba Sanum] has been compelled to govern the Mossi with unmitigated despotism. His fear of losing power led him to take such severe measures that he was forced to relax them. As soon as his major vassals saw this, they took these concessions as signs of fear and began to conspire secretly against him. Today, the chiefs of Mani, Boussouma, Yako, and Koupela represent forces with which Naba Sanum will have to reckon. . . . Before long, the Mossi empire will break up; the country will organize into confederacies like those of Beledougou and Yatenga.[17]

It is not completely clear, however, whether Binger really understood the intricacies of the Mossi political organization. He lists as "vassals" of the Mogho Naba such territories as Mane, Kaya, Koupela, Bonsa, Boussouma, Djitenga, Boulsa, Dakay, and Doulougou, as though they were all related to Ouagadougou in the same way. In reality, some were autonomous and some were directly dependent on the Ouagadougou ruler. It is possible that at the time of Binger's visit, the relations between the Mogho Naba and his subordinates were so fluid that the outsider had difficulty in understanding them. If this is the case, then the situation in Mossi country had indeed changed when the Europeans came in.

Crozat, who says the Mossi governmental structure was feudal in na-

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ADMINISTRATION

631 ture, offers what is probably the best analysis of power relations among the
628 important Mossi chiefs. In commenting upon the Mogho Naba's inability
174 to stop the war between Yako and Yatenga he asks, "How could it be
114 otherwise? With what sanctions could this king without an army back up his orders if he ventured to give any? . . . In short, when the Ouagadougou ruler speaks, he is sometimes obeyed. If he is, all is well; if he is not, all is still well. Everything remains as before."[18] Crozat was mistaken if he believed that the Mogho Naba did not have a fighting force. What he did not have was a standing army to exercise his power whenever he wished. When he was able to summon an army, he was effective; when he was not, he had little power over any territory but his own. Crozat, like Binger, gives a strange picture of the political relationship between the Mogho Naba and the other rulers. He tells us that in the Mossi political hierarchy, "after the ruler of Ouagadougou comes the ruler of Boussouma, then the Yatenga ruler, and then the ruler of Yako."[19] Yatenga was traditionally independent of Ouagadougou, whereas Boussouma and Yako were simply autonomous principalities dependent on the Mogho Naba. It is possible that Crozat mistook the relative power of these various political entities for a hierarchical relationship. It is also possible that at the time of his visit, the Dimdamba felt sufficiently powerful to ignore the traditional hierarchy as far as their political relationship with other rulers was concerned, and were simply acknowledging relative gradations of power.

643 Clearly, the sovereignty of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou over the
642 independent kingdoms and autonomous principalities depended chiefly on
628 military might. The stronger a Mogho Naba was, the more actively he tried to control the internal administration of the autonomous principalities and to exercise police powers over them or on their behalf. However, most Mogho Nanamse were content to claim superiority or control over the independent kingdoms and refrained from meddling in their affairs.

643 Within the Mogho Naba's own kingdom, however, the situation was
635 different. Here, like other important Mossi rulers, he directed the admin-
634 istrative apparatus. For administrative purposes, the kingdom of Ouaga-
[642] dougou was divided into five large provinces (*weto*; sing. *weogho*; or
[161] *solem*, from *so*, "command"). Together they included some three hundred districts, in which there were over four thousand villages inhabited by some 862,000 persons.[20] (Not included here were districts and villages directly administered by the Mogho Naba.) The provinces were not compact physical entities, because their component units were scattered throughout the country. To be sure, some of the districts within a province were close together or even contiguous, but many others stood alongside districts be-

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The district chief was relatively secure in the control of his territory as long as he maintained amicable relations with his immediate superiors and administered his district to their satisfaction. A less important but more constant source of concern was his relationship with neighboring chiefs. Many people who can remember the pre-conquest period say it was unsafe for a man to trespass into another district unless he was on an official mission from his chief to another chief. It appears that most of the fighting occurred over strayed cattle and stolen women, with constant raids and counter-raids. The cattle were eaten, and the women kept as wives. Captured men were sometimes sold as slaves, but more often were held for ransom. They were not kept as slaves, since the Mossi were forbidden to enslave other Mossi. Needless to say, this fighting was frowned upon by the Mogho Naba. Since all district chiefs believed in their common descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri and paid allegiance to the Mogho Naba, any fighting among them was not only a sin against the ancestors but also an act of disloyalty to the Mogho Naba. When (as was usually the case) this fighting was of short duration and few people were killed, the Mogho Naba took no official notice of it. But when it became serious, he sent the provincial administrator to stop the fighting and to summon the dissident elements to the capital for trial. The speed and severity with which the Mogho Naba dealt with quarrels within his own realm usually depended upon his strength. At some periods in Mossi history there was little internal disorder, because the rulers were strong; at other periods, under weak rulers, disorder practically amounted to internal chaos. During such periods, the Mossi were kept together only by the bonds of kinship and religion which united them against outsiders.

The district chief maintained tight control over his own territory and took an active part in its administration. In a district like Nobere, for example, the chief was aided both by an informal council and by an administrative apparatus similar to but smaller than the one at Ouagadougou. The council included men with whom the chief had grown up, members of his immediate family such as his brothers, and a few formal administrative personnel. These councillors visited him every day, brought him occasional gifts, received gifts from him in turn, and discussed informally all matters of interest. Yet, informal as this communication was, it enabled the district chief to know what was going on in his villages. Moreover, these councillors interceded for various villages and gave the chief valuable advice in administrative matters.

The formal administrative personnel of the district included a Ouidi Naba, a Baloum Naba, a Tansoba, and lesser officials with titles identical

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difficulty discharging these duties, for, nobles aside, the Mossi usually obeyed orders from their chiefs—a fact verified by most observers. At the same time, a district chief had to be temperate in his demands upon his villagers, and could not take advantage of his obligations to the Mogho Naba as a means of personal enrichment. Similarly, the district administrators could not seek personal gain either by augmenting the demands of the district chief or by withholding part of the goods and services rendered to him. District administrators who were found guilty of maladministration or embezzlement were executed, because activities of this kind could—and often did—jeopardize the life of the district chief.

The Mossi might complain among themselves about the administrative policies of their district chief, but they took no measures against him unless he was very cruel or exploitative. A district chief who by his disregard for the people's welfare was believed to have lost the ability to "command people" jeopardized not only his position but also his life. When the people were dissatisfied with a chief, they either boycotted him or deserted their villages and migrated to another district, thus "increasing the force" (nam) of the chief who gave them sanctuary. This placed the deserted chief in a rather difficult position. Mogho Nanamse are known to have ordered the execution of district chiefs and even autonomous Dimdamba who had lost their subjects through their own fault. In 1863, when Mogho Naba Sanum was informed that the ruler of Boussouma, Naba Zande, had been chased away by his subjects for administrative abuses and had fled to a Ouagadougou village, he had him captured and executed.[29] Thus, the threat that people might leave the district was often strong enough to ensure a just administration, because the district chiefs and officials depended upon the villagers not only for the economic support of the central administration but also for their livelihood and their lives.

Those district chiefs who supervised other district chiefs for the Mogho Naba did not interfere with the internal administration of the districts. The chiefs of the Vooko and Nobila districts, for instance, had administrators of their own to look after their villages. But they were responsible to the chief of Nobere district, not their respective provincial ministers, for their internal affairs. Moreover, they had to follow the Nobere chief when he went to Ouagadougou to pay homage and allegiance to the Mogho Naba. But aside from these prescriptions, the chiefs of these subordinate districts administered their territories in the same manner as the Nobere chief administered his own.

The Mossi village chief had no administrators of his own to help him with day-to-day affairs of his village. However, like the district chief, he

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ruler to grant asylum to Mogho Naba Wobogo in 1897. He adds that it was probably the injunction in the pact that they should never meet which prevented the ruler from personally receiving Wobogo.[13]

A ritual pact also bound the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou to the ruler of Dagomba. He sent him goods from the estate of the previous Mogho Naba as well as gifts for yearly sacrifices on the grave of Nyennega, the Mossi progenitrix. There are reports that the Ouagadougou ruler also exchanged annual presents with the Ashanti ruler, but it is not known whether these were courtesy gifts or goods sanctioning ritual pacts.

The ritual pacts among Mossi kingdoms and between them and their neighbors appear to have derived from actual or putative kinship ties. This seems to be supported not only by the traditions of the Mossi but also by those of the surrounding peoples. Whatever their origin, these pacts seem to have afforded their beneficiaries a remarkable degree of freedom from external aggression. It is possible that the Mossi and their neighbors really believed in the efficacy of supernatural sanctions, for purposes of mutual protection. But one suspects that it was the relative weakness of these various groups that caused them to rely on supernatural agencies rather than military might for protection. As will be pointed out below, the Mossi (and probably all of their important neighbors) had considerable difficulty in building and maintaining a fighting force sufficiently large to wage protracted or large-scale wars against foreign groups.

The Mossi kingdoms seldom fought among themselves, although their leaders quarreled over status and committed aggression against each other's territories. For example, the Ouagadougou rulers, who claimed suzerainty over Yatenga, often tried to impose their will on that kingdom. Yet, although they were usually rebuffed by the Yatenga Naba, they never tried to resolve the issue by force of arms. In fact, even when a Yatenga ruler appears to have given the Mogho Naba just cause for war, little fighting actually took place. Several times the Yatenga rulers seized such principalities as Riziam and Yako, which were dependent on Ouagadougou, but in no case did the Ouagadougou rulers wage war against them. In 1890, Crozat witnessed Mogho Naba Wobogo's attempt to stop a war between Yatenga and Yako. The Yako people wanted to obey their sovereign and stop the war, but the Yatenga monarch refused to do so.[14]

Crozat attributes the ineffectiveness of the Mogho Naba's authority over brother kingdoms to the fact that he had no standing army with which to enforce his rule. While relative strength may have been and probably was the main reason for the Mogho Naba's lack of aggressiveness, the ritual pact that prevented the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou from meeting the

WARFARE

Yatenga Naba (and other rulers) or treading on his territory should not be overlooked. The suggestion that force was not the only consideration was lent force by later events. The French conquest later reduced the rulers of both Ouagadougou and Yatenga to impotence and obviated war between them, yet they did not meet until 1946—some fifty years after the conquest. They met then only because they had to represent their subjects at a meeting to plan the restoration of the Upper Volta and reunite all the descendants of Oubri and Ouedraogo into one territory.

Relative strength obviously played an important part in determining whether one Mossi kingdom interfered in the internal affairs of another. For example, when a Tenkodogo ruler asked a Mogho Naba to help him suppress Busansi subjects who had rebelled, the Mogho Naba readily complied.[14] But when a fratricidal struggle over the nam broke out in Tenkodogo in 1894, the Mogho Naba decided not to intervene even though he was asked to do so.[15]

The central governments of the various kingdoms found it necessary to wage war against their subordinate territories at regular intervals. In the Ouagadougou kingdom, most of these wars seem to have been administrative actions against a prince or district chief who had contravened an order from the Mogho Naba or refused to pay tribute. The Dimdamba were the Mogho Naba's most rebellious subordinates, and it was against them that he fought most of his wars. Characteristic of these wars was the series between Naba Ligidi (1866–90), Dim of Boussouma province, and Mogho Naba Sanum.[16] Ligidi had seized and turned over to the Mogho Naba the recalcitrant Naba Yemde, then Dim of Boulsa, and confiscated the rebel's property. Later on, when the Mogho Naba had made peace with Yemde's son, Naba Kiba, he asked Ligidi to surrender the seized property. Ligidi refused to do so, and the angry Mogho Naba sent the royal army into his territory. The army sacked and burned several villages and retreated. Ligidi's forces skirmished with the rear guard but abandoned pursuit near the Ouagadougou border.

Ligidi took his revenge by helping a district chief who had rebelled against Naba Kiba. While he was thus engaged, the royal army again attacked and defeated him. Four days later, it reinvaded Boussouma, engaged Ligidi's forces at a place called Goudri, and won a brilliant victory. Despite Ligidi's furious counter-attacks, the army captured his capital, Ouayougya. The ruler's army finally returned to Ouagadougou, satisfied that Ligidi was thoroughly beaten. But the Mogho Naba had underestimated Ligidi's tenacity. For the next ten years, this Dim waged war against his fellow Dimdamba. The Mogho Naba finally grew tired of his depreda-

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tions and launched another expedition against Ouayougya. The expedition failed because of a lack of water, and the army was forced to return to Ouagadougou. The war would have continued had not both Mogho Naba Sanum and Ligidi died in 1890.

It appears that the Mogho Naba tolerated fighting among his immediate subordinates, and seldom intervened in local wars unless one of the combatants openly flouted his authority. For example, when the autonomous principality of Riziam attempted to wrest control of Salmetenga district from Boussouma province, Mogho Naba Doulougou did not intervene. He knew that Salmetenga owed allegiance to Boussouma, but was perfectly willing to allow its ruler to transfer allegiance to Riziam. When Boussouma was on the brink of defeat, the Salmetenga Naba fled to Ouagadougou to seek asylum. The Mogho Naba sent him back to Naba Piga, the Boussouma Dim, with the request that he be allowed to live. Piga was so angry with the chief that he ignored the Mogho Naba's request and executed him. This incurred the wrath of Mogho Naba Doulougou, and he sent an army to attack Piga. Fortunately for this disobedient Dim, the Mogho Naba died and the attack was called off.[17]

The reaction of Mogho Naba Koutou to fighting among his subordinates was more typical. He did not interfere in a long series of battles between the principalities of Riziam and Mane which culminated in 1866 when the Riziam people seized, imprisoned, and executed several Mane merchants who had gone to buy salt in Timbuktu. Mane appealed to its brother province of Boussouma for aid, and Riziam appealed to a Fulani chieftain for reinforcements. Before a battle could ensue, however, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, died after drinking some millet beer, and the fighting was called off. Naba Kom of Mane then went off alone with his army, defeated the Fulani, and killed their chief, Sekki. When Ligidi (the chief mentioned above) succeeded his father, Naba Siguiri, he elected to continue the war against Riziam with the help of the Mane army, but the battle was inconclusive. The stalemate did not satisfy the bellicose Ligidi, who attacked Riziam once more in 1871, burning villages and seizing property. The Riziam people finally rallied and halted him. They ambushed his soldiers when they tried to retreat, and harried them so thoroughly that Ligidi had to call off the war when slaughter and thirst decimated his ranks.[18]

Similarly, Mogho Naba Sanum did not interfere when one of his own district chiefs, the Salogho Naba, was attacked and defeated by the ruler of Tema principality. Nor did he enter the fray when another of his district chiefs was attacked and defeated by the Boulsa Dim. The fighting in both

cases was over women. The Tema Dim successfully defended his principality against a Zittenga district chief who not only had the effrontery to demand the return of a wife who had fled into Tema but also invaded the principality when she failed to return.[19] The Boulsa Dim attacked and defeated the Salogho Naba when he refused to repatriate a man and woman convicted of adultery who had fled into his district. It is possible that in each case the Mogho Naba refused to become involved in a squabble over women, but it is more likely that he refrained from participating in a local war that did not threaten the security of the entire country.

Many Dimdamba made it a practice to help each other in wars against common enemies. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Naba Zende of Tema and Naba Totoabo of Yako joined in a war against Naba Sebogo of La when Sebogo refused to repatriate one of Totoabo's wives, who had fled into his territory. The two victorious allies burned villages in La and forced Sebogo to flee for his life. They searched for the woman, but she was never found. The successors of the three rulers remained embittered by this war and eventually renewed the fighting. On this occasion, Naba Tanga of Tema and Naba Sagha of Yako fought against Naba Kombase of La. But this time Yako and Tema were unable to defeat La and had to withdraw. There is no evidence that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou took any part in these wars.[20]

The Mogho Naba appears to have taken a greater interest in wars between his Dimdamba and non-Mossi populations, and to have profited by them occasionally. When the followers of a Fulani chief named Karfo carried off some cattle belonging to the Boussouma people, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, threatened war if the animals were not returned. Karfo not only refused to surrender the cattle but insulted Siguiri in his reply. Siguiri marched against the Fulani, killed Karfo, seized all the cattle he could find, and sent some of the "most beautiful animals" to Mogho Naba Koutou.[21]

Although the Mogho Naba tolerated wars among his Dimdamba, he apparently forbade the district chiefs under his direct command to fight among themselves. As we saw in Chapter IV, some such fighting did take place, but the Mogho Naba seems to have ignored it in most cases because of its relative unimportance. The Mossi, on the other hand, magnified this local fighting, which they called *tengkom* ("civil war"), and which consisted of mere skirmishes between villages or neighboring districts, with few casualties. In fact, the Gounga Naba once stopped a war between districts after only nineteen persons had died. But as a rule, districts seldom if ever fought among themselves. The actual combatants were villagers

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who fought the villagers of other districts over stray livestock, stolen goods, and runaway women, in that order of frequency.

The main reason for these inter-village wars was the lack of local mechanisms (aside from meetings of district chiefs) to deal with problems between villagers of different districts. If the district chiefs refused to meet, they could either refer the matter to the provincial level or allow the villages to resolve the problem among themselves. Many district chiefs preferred the latter course because it saved them from interference by the authorities in the capital. Besides, these problems were usually unimportant and did not pit one entire district against another. People of different districts were often bound to each other by familial and ritual ties, and did not like to fight against relatives. Only when the potential combatants were unrelated or all attempts at reconciliation failed would the people of a village (and occasionally of a district) band together, either secretly without their chiefs or under their chiefs, and go to war. In such cases, persons who had relatives in the enemy villages often remained at home.

The inhabitants of Mossi districts did band together eagerly under their chiefs to participate in slave-raiding expeditions into non-Mossi territories. This type of warfare seems to have been fairly common. Ruelle writes, "Before our [French] occupation, warfare was the chief preoccupation of the chiefs. Moreover, expeditions into Gurunsi country had as their goal pillage and the procurement of slaves for sale."[22] Similarly, Mangin states, "The Gurunsi and Busansi were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves."[23] Binger gives the following description of a Mossi slave-catching expedition and the subsequent disposal of the slaves:

> During my second stay at Banema, Boukary [later Mogho Naba Wobogo], knowing my aversion to pillage and slavery and fearing to displease me, sent off two expeditions during the night without warning me—one to Nabouli, and the other towards the south to Baouer'a. By six o'clock in the morning of the following day, the returning horsemen were heralded by gunshots. Soon afterwards, a line of slaves of both sexes appeared, tied to each other by a cord slung around their necks. The expedition to Nabouli brought back seventeen slaves; that to Baouer'a brought only five, along with an ass laden with salt and a little cotton. As soon as these unfortunate people arrived, they were given water to drink, and mallets were used to remove the rings and copper bracelets which they wore on their arms and legs. Then they were classified into three categories:
>
> 1. The men formed a lot destined for immediate sale for fear that they should run away. They were led forthwith to Sakhaboutenga, to be exchanged against sorghum for the horses, millet for the personnel, and gunpowder.
> 2. A second lot, composed of women, was kept as a reserve to trade for horses.

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posted to alert the troops in case the enemy should attempt an attack at dawn. If the war was waged against foreigners, individual soldiers were allowed to keep a slave or a cow out of the booty; the remainder was divided between the district chiefs and the central government. In victorious civil wars against the enemies of the Mogho Naba, however, the entire booty was sent to the capital.

When the Mossi had to defend their own territory, their most common tactic was to evacuate the villages. This was the technique most often employed against invading French forces.[29] Other defenses included palisaded villages, barricades of fallen trees, trenches, and hedges, some with poisoned foot traps. Mangin reports that the Boulsa were defeated in their war with Fada-N'Gourma not only because their enemies fought valiantly, but also because they "were favored by very propitious terrain covered with thorny scrub, behind which the besieged men took cover to shoot on the Mossi."[30] Mangin does not say whether the scrub was poisoned, but his data indicate that this type of defense was common in the area. The Mossi say that the use of poisoned prickly plants (*silenage*) against invading forces dates back to the early conquest of the territory. Tradition recounts that Naba Oubri was unable to conquer Ouagadougou until his Ninisi wife advised him to shoe his soldiers against the poisoned foot traps of the aborigines.

Mossi wars or raids were usually limited to the dry season and stopped at the beginning of the planting season. Commenting on the war between Boulsa and Fada-N'Gourma, Mangin tells us: "This was during the dry season. Thirst completed what the courage of the Gyekango people had begun, and many Mossi perished."[31] Tradition recounts that it took Mogho Naba Waraga five successive years of attack before he defeated Ramzi, the rebellious chief of Riziam principality. He finally defeated him when his army attacked the province before its people had been able to harvest their crops and retire into an impregnable fortress for the dry season. Judging by the reports of European visitors, this type of dry-season warfare continued as late as the 1890's. For example, Crozat could not understand why the Mogho Naba did not send an army to defeat the chief of Lalle district, who had imprudently raided a village near Ouagadougou, and he concluded that the ruler did not have an army. The fact is, however, that Crozat was in Ouagadougou between September 9 and September 30, a period when the potential soldiers of the Mogho Naba had not yet harvested their crops. Had Crozat remained in Mossi country for three or four months longer, he would have seen the ruler's army in action; for, as a matter of fact, the Lalle Naba's attack on Mogho Naba Wobogo was but the latest episode in a prolonged struggle between the two rulers.

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726 For several years Mogho Naba Sanum had tried unsuccessfully to corner
628 and defeat the rebellious Lalle Naba. Then one dry season the Mogho Naba
669 called his Tansoba and said to him:

> "I want you to assemble immediately an army composed only of courageous men, to go to Lalle and bring me, alive, Tanga [also called Wobogo], chief of that district." Several thousand men, eager for glory, were gathered, and the army advanced against Lalle. It managed to burn Siguele, Tanga's residence, but did not capture the chief, who had fled to Koudougou. The royal army would have pursued him, but because the rainy season was imminent, and the men were needed to work in the fields, the army returned to Ouagadougou with a considerable amount of booty. The king received his war minister very kindly, because he foresaw the impending defeat of his obstinate enemy. The Mogho Naba then said to his warriors, "Go and cultivate your fields, but remember that as soon as the harvest has been stored, you have to capture Tanga. Regardless of the cost, I must have him, even if all of you must die."[33]

Mogho Naba Sanum died before he could capture Tanga, and the task fell to his successor, Mogho Naba Wobogo, who fared no better. One dry season, the royal army chased the rebel into Gurunsi territory but failed to catch him. They would have continued the chase, but "it was during the rainy season, and the royal army was disbanded."[33]

[648] Mogho Naba Wobogo never succeeded in capturing Tanga, because the French came in and conquered the Mossi. Nevertheless, the rebel did not go unpunished. After the French had completed their conquest they asked the Ouidi Naba what steps should be taken to ensure peace. He told them to capture and kill the Lalle Naba. This unfortunate chief was hunted down, captured, placed on an unsaddled colt, and brought to Ouagadougou, where he was publicly humiliated and then executed.

701 The episode with Tanga and the limiting of warfare to the dry season
726 indicate that the Mogho Naba did not have the resources to maintain a standing army, and, therefore, had difficulty exerting his authority by the use of force. There is no doubt that the Mogho Nanamse were able to gather very large armies at specific times against both internal and external enemies, but when the planting period came the soldiers had to attend to their crops. This lack of resources also limited the power and authority of Mogho Nanamse over their autonomous subordinates. As a result, the Mossi kingdoms remained segmentary in nature, and became highly organized only at certain periods of their history.[34] The availability of military resources thus had a significant effect on the nature of the Mossi governmental and political system.